Conclusion

This essay was concerned with the self-sense of a people. Through the lives of Narmad, Manibhai and Govardhanram an attempt was made to comprehend the nature of this self-sense and the processes by which it came to be articulated.

For Narmad the process of self understanding took two diverse paths. One path led him towards modernity while the other propelled him towards historicity. His desire was to modernize Gujarati language and literature. He also desired to be the agent of this transformation. Narmad wrote the first autobiography in Gujarati, created a first Gujarati-Gujarati lexicon, compiled a dictionary of epical figures. He also inaugurated modern phase of poetics in Gujarati. Narmad introduced new ideas and subjects to Gujarati poetry. He also explored the possibilities of the prose form. Narmad's Rajpurang is the first book of world history in Gujarati. He also embraced printing technology with ease and vigour.

Narmad endeavoured to reform the society. His attempt was to radically alter the foundations of social and religious life. Coupled with desire was an overwhelming need to understand himself and his people. This need took him to explore history as a mode of self knowing. Narmad wrote self history
(autobiography), history of his town, history of literary tradition to which he belonged, history of the people, and the roots of their cultural beliefs and finally the history of the world. This engagement with history and historicity allowed him to understand modes of social transformation. Narmad's life and his thought is constituted by this tension between desire for modernity and need for historicity. Towards the end of his life he gave primacy to historicity over modernity. His knowledge about himself and his society is a result of these twin processes.

Manilal's engagement with the present of his society is remarkable. He sees his society and his people disintegrating. The presence of the West is the source of this disintegration. His attempt is to provide a principle that would cohere his society. The idea of abheda becomes for him this principle that coheres. Sense of disintegration is also evident in his own life. He attempted in vain to provide a locus to his life. The idea of love with its own sense of abheda became for him an instrument through which life was sought to be held together. The personal and the societal are joined through the idea of abheda.

By employing history of ideology Manibhai could imagine a harmonious past, present and future for his society. But his personal search for a location led him towards self-destruction. Perhaps this was inevitable as he was living the possible fate of his society through his self.

Govardhanram's concern is not so much either with the past or the present of his society. He wished to create a harmonious future for his people. This he sought to do through the characters of his novel and his daughter Lilavati. His attempt was to create a new morality for his society. Govardhanram had hoped that the complete and all-encompassing system, The Philosophy of Consumption would allow him to forge a new people. Govardhanram is tragically self-conscious about the intertwined fates of his societal and personal endeavours. With the death of Lilavati faith in his philosophy was no longer available to him.
For Narmad, Manilal and Govardhanram self became the ground from which the societal engagement emerged and was nourished. Their attempts are to forge a self sense that would allow for a deep engagement with society. They had to therefore live not only personal tragedies but also societal predicament.

Narmad, Manilal and Govardhanram through their own individual experiments on the self laid the ground for M. K. Gandhi.